

The Public

First Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 1899.

Number 42.

LOUIS F. POST, Editor.

Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post-office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last column of last page.

It appears that the war department has established a censorship over political news between the United States and the Philippine islands. For this reason Americans are getting but little information regarding the situation there; and it may be inferred that the Filipinos are not getting much about the debates in the senate. What real occasion is there for an American censorship over political information when the state of war is so purely nominal? Is it another indication of the drift toward imperialism?

The three Filipino representatives who have just arrived in this country to represent the claims to independence of the Aguinaldo republic are savages, of course, and without any present capacity for self-government. One of them is a professor in a medical college, and another—a man in such a low state of barbarism that he cannot even converse with an American without an interpreter—is an artist whose monstrosities are regularly exhibited at the Paris salon, where Parisians mistake them for works of real art. That such people are unfit for independence goes almost without saying.

Gen. Eagan's angry attack upon Gen. Miles, before the war investigating committee, has done much to turn public opinion against him, simply because it was angry. Anger is very generally regarded as evidence of a weak cause. But that is a mistake. It is evidence only of a weak advocate. Charles Lamb was not far from right when he argued that the anger of the advocate is frequently indica-

tive of the justness of his cause. The weak advocate of a just cause may easily be excited to frenzy by an indifferent but self-possessed adversary who cares nothing for causes. It would often be better if we looked with less suspicion upon the cause of the angry advocate and with more upon that of the calm, cold special pleader. Of course, Gen. Eagan does not prove by his anger that his cause is just. In fact, it is very likely far from being so. All the known circumstances tend to support Gen. Miles. But Gen. Eagan's cause should not be condemned merely because he has lost his temper.

Gen. Miles very appropriately calls attention to the fact that the president's investigating committee has examined nearly everybody on the subject of food supplies for the army, except the private soldiers who had to eat what he described as "embalmed beef." There are "hundreds of these men," says Gen. Miles, "who would be willing to be heard," and who, he believes, "would tell the truth and nothing but the truth." Why is it that the president's committee is so chary of inviting private soldiers to be witnesses?

Most sincerely is it to be hoped that Ida Wells Barnett will sue the proprietors of the Palmer house of Chicago and mulct them in exemplary damages. As one of the members of the League of Cook County Woman's Clubs, she attended a meeting at the League last week at the Palmer house, and was compelled to climb the stairs to the meeting room. She had entered an elevator, but was ordered out by a hotel employe whose act was afterwards approved by the hotel manager. Mrs. Barnett is one of the best known and respected women of Chicago. The only reason for excluding

her from the elevator was that she is of the African race.

Senator Ford has introduced in the legislature of New York a good bill bearing on the subject of taxation. It would require the publication annually of the assessed valuations of real estate in the city of New York, with the valuation of lots distinguished from that of improvements. It is public ignorance of comparative assessments that makes real estate tax frauds easy. If everyone interested in taxation could readily compare the assessments of lots with improvements, of vacant lots with improved lots, of property in one locality with property in others, of the property of any owner with that of any other owner, assessorships would soon cease to be peculiarly profitable, and small property owners would before long unload the excessive proportion of real estate taxation which they now bear.

Apparently President McKinley is changing front on the Philippine question. Of his intention to give the Filipinos the blessings of American liberty, even if he had to slaughter half of them to do it, there was but a few days ago no reason to doubt. Colonization was not only the idea; it was the word, too. Nothing could have been plainer than that it had become the settled policy of the republican party, by presidential command, and through that party and the president, of the country at large, to take possession of the Philippine archipelago and govern it as an American dependency. All thought of independence for the Filipinos was jeered at; annexation as an integral part of the American system, under the protection of the American constitution, was not open to consideration. The archipelago was to belong to the American

government, but to be no part of the American Union; the Filipinos were to be subject to American control, but to derive no guarantees of liberty from the American bill of rights. They were to have liberty, to be sure; but according to Speaker Reed's apt description it was to be "canned liberty."

Without wasting ink on the exclamatory editorials of papers like the New York Journal, those semi-official organs of McKinley's kitchen cabinet, which denounced all opposition to the Philippine colonization scheme as high treason against the United States, we may make the imperialistic intentions of the administration sufficiently evident by recalling the history of the past three months.

It was in October that Mr. McKinley went upon his electioneering tour through the middle west, via the Omaha exposition. From place to place he made speeches to cheering audiences; and as the cheering seemed to be most enthusiastic when he hinted at appropriating the Philippines, his speeches became more and more imperialistic, bolder and bolder, until at Chicago he announced that "duty determines destiny." This he did with an undisguised implication that it was the destiny of the United States to own the Philippine islands.

Two months later, as an opening skirmish for the presidential campaign of 1900, Mr. McKinley took a speaking trip through the south. On this occasion, in a public speech at Atlanta, he made his imperialistic purposes more evident than ever. Saying that the American flag had been planted in "two hemispheres," an unmistakable allusion to the Philippines, he concluded:

Who will withdraw from the people over whom it floats, its protecting folds? Who will haul it down?

This was only an interrogative expression, made for rhetorical effect, of a positive purpose. The president meant precisely what Gen. Grosvenor, his reputed representative on the

floor of the house of representatives, meant last summer when at the Ohio republican convention he proclaimed that the American flag must never be hauled down from any place over which it floats. The same expression was repeated again and again, and when the president gave it interrogative form in his Atlanta speech, he was universally understood as having given the sentiment his sanction. Of course, if the flag may not be hauled down from any place over which it floats, it can never be hauled down from the Philippines. The president's question, therefore, was equivalent to a declaration that the Filipinos should never be accorded self-governing rights.

This purpose became active a few days later, when the possible capture of Iloilo from the Spanish by the Filipinos was reported. Our flag had not yet floated over Panay, the island on which Iloilo is located—not even by implication. The peace protocol gave it the right to float only at Manila. But American troops were ordered to Iloilo at once with instructions from the war department to "take immediate possession." The object was to make the flag float over Iloilo, so that later the president might ask "who will haul it down?" and the permanent hold of the United States upon the Philippines be thereby strengthened. Fortunately, however, the Filipinos captured Iloilo before the American troops arrived.

The intention of permanent occupation was made still more manifest by the president in his message of instructions to the secretary of war, under date of December 21. In this message, after requiring that the Filipinos be assured that the mission of the United States is one of "benevolent assimilation," a phrase which certainly hints at permanent American sovereignty, he said that—

for the greatest good of the governed—meaning the Filipinos—

there must be sedulously maintained the strong arm of authority to repress disturbances and to overcome all ob-

stacles to the bestowal of the blessings of good and stable government upon the people of the Philippine islands under the free flag of the United States.

"Under the free flag of the United States"! Is that susceptible of any other interpretation than a purpose to establish American government in the archipelago permanently? How can it admit of a different interpretation when the treaty in pursuance of which the instructions were given—a treaty virtually dictated from the white house—while providing only for the relinquishment of Spanish sovereignty in Cuba, made a direct cession of Spanish sovereignty to the United States in the Philippines? And why are we to pay \$20,000,000 for the Philippines if not to annex or own them in perpetuity?

While the president was thus exposing his imperialistic hand, other men of "light and leading" in the march of imperial progress were diligently furnishing arguments in support of imperial colonization as a constitutional program. Prof. McMaster and some of his confreres dug up bad and forgotten precedents to show that the federal authorities are constitutionally empowered to govern dependencies in perpetuity, outside of the constitution and regardless of its safeguards. Gen. Merritt didn't care whether the exercise of such power would be constitutional or not, for in his imperial enthusiasm he believed that we had "outgrown the constitution." Senator Platt of Connecticut amended that clause of the declaration of independence which asserts that "government derives its just power from the consent of the governed" so as to make it read, "from the consent of some of the governed." And Senator Teller had so completely assimilated the imperialistic idea that he referred prematurely to the Filipinos as American "subjects." There was no room for doubt up to the last days of the year, and no one on either side of the question entertained a doubt, that it was the president's policy to subjugate the Philippine islanders and make them perpetual subjects of the

federal government at Washington. Neither was there any doubt that pursuant to this purpose he intended if necessary to attack the natives at Iloilo and wrest the city and island from them.

But suddenly a change comes. It seems to have been borne in upon the mind of the president that if, under the circumstances, he were to attack the Filipinos at Iloilo he would commit an act of war without authority from congress, our only war-making power. That would be an impeachable offense of the highest grade. So the belligerent campaign against Iloilo, foreshadowed by his message to the secretary of war on December 21, in which he ordered that all persons anywhere in the Philippines who obstructed American occupation be dealt with "with firmness if need be, but without severity so far as may be possible," was allowed to languish. The purpose, however, to permanently subjugate the Filipinos after the ratification of the peace treaty, in which sovereignty over them is ceded, was still clung to, so far as the public could judge.

But that purpose, too, showed marked signs of collapse before the new year had grown half a month old. Senator Foraker was the first to tell of it. In his speech in the senate on the 11th in advocacy of the peace treaty, while specifying the three courses possible of adoption regarding the Philippines—Spanish sovereignty, anarchy, or independence—he said, as reported in the Congressional Record:

We had left on our hands the choice of allowing them their independence and the privilege of establishing a free republic, which I do not understand anybody intends to deny them, except only temporarily at the most.

Requested by Senator Hoar to repeat this remark, Senator Foraker answered:

I do not know of anybody who wants to take possession of the Phillipine islands and govern the people of those islands indefinitely against their will by force of arms.

Still further pressed by Mr. Hoar upon the same point, the Ohio senator exclaimed:

I say I do not know of anybody, from the president of the United States down to his humblest follower in this matter, who is proposing by force and violence to take and hold those islands for all time to come.

Senator Foraker was at the time regarded as speaking for the president with authority. He may have intended only to place the president in the embarrassing position of being obliged either to assert his imperial purpose, or by silence under circumstances requiring speech to acquiesce in Foraker's policy. Be that as it may, the presidential attitude toward the Philippine question has evidently undergone a marked change.

The idea of establishing a foreign dominion, like that of England in India, over the Philippines in perpetuity, and the disposition for that purpose to make a military attack upon a peaceable Philippine city, have for the present at least been abandoned. One of the peace commissioners, Senator Gray, is authority for the assurance, made in a public speech on the 14th, and based upon "some knowledge," so he says, that the president "is committed to no policy calculated to discourage, much less strike down, the aspirations of liberty loving people all over the world." Between this idea and the proposition to make the American flag stay forever where it is put, there is a wide gulf; but the circumstances at present indicate that Mr. McKinley has crossed it. His imperial policy appears to have come to grief early in its career.

Among the republicans who have been instrumental in causing President McKinley to reverse, or at least to suppress, his Philippine policy, Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, is first and foremost. But Senator Mason, of Illinois, is not far behind. Though his speech in the senate did not deal with constitutional questions, as did Senator Hoar's, it did deal, and most ably, with a more sacred American document than the constitution. The

corner stone of Mason's speech was the declaration of independence. Not only was it an able and interesting speech, but it was redolent of democracy. One of the gratifying things about the political issues into which the war has plunged us is that they have revived within the republican party serious discussions of fundamental principles that have long been ignored as academic or sentimental. Both Mason's speech and Hoar's recall the truly democratic origin of their party.

Imperialism is not the only presidential policy to experience a setback. The project for a large standing army would naturally suffer with the political policy that makes an excuse for militarism. But it has received a check also from other directions. Friends of the Hull army bill in the house are reported as panic-stricken over the prospects of a ripping up of army scandals through the court-martial which the president has been forced by Gen. Eagan's indiscreet display of temper to order. Besides the army bill, the banking ring currency bill is also likely to go by the board. H. H. Hanna, president of the National Sound Money League, has made a canvass of the house, so it is reported from Washington, to find not only that no currency legislation this session is probable, but moreover that the plans of his organization have been completely frustrated in the house by the adverse report of Comptroller Dawes. With imperialism suppressed, the establishment of a large standing army prevented, and the currency monopoly scheme frustrated, confidence in the ultimate triumph of right in popular government may revive.

President McKinley is nothing if not smooth. And in no way has he exhibited his smooth qualities with greater smoothness than in his dexterous shelving of Gen. Fitzhugh Lee. Lee was the biggest figure of the war, when the war broke out. As American consul-general in Cuba, he had left Havana under circumstances that